

LIB 1201 - Research & Documentation for the Information Age

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<http://lib1201fall2010.wordpress.com>

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Information Search Worksheet

1. Your research question

What are the key words and phrases in your research question?

Write your question below, then **circle** the important words or phrases and cross out other words:

Example: ~~Should~~ **Wikipedia** ~~be used as a~~ **source** ~~of~~ **information?**

Circle important words or phrases that best describes your topic

Avoid using vague or non-descriptive words like **the, it, in, used, at.**


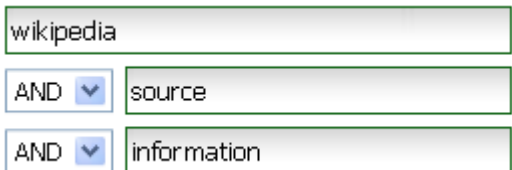
2. Transforming keywords into a search statement

Connect your keywords or phrases with **AND**

Example using AND	Your new search statement connected with AND	Why use AND ?
wikipedia and source and information		AND focuses your search by requiring that all words are present in the information retrieved

3. Test your search statement

Test your new search statement in the library catalog (<http://library.citytech.cuny.edu/>) and one library database (<http://library.citytech.cuny.edu/research/AToZ/>):

For books: use the Find Books tab on the library's website	For articles: Find Articles tab → Databases A to Z → Academic Search Complete
ONE box searching: type AND between your search words in one long string 	THREE box searching: place a keyword or phrase in each box, AND is automatically placed in between the boxes 

4. Your results: too much information?

Did you get too many search results? Your topic may be too broad and needs to be narrowed.

You may want to break your topic down by population, issue, and/or location:

Examples of populations	Examples of issues	Examples of locations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• children• adults• elderly• African American• women	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• education• racism• sports• technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• United States• Asia• New York City• Los Angeles• Midwest

Add a subtopic to your search like the ones listed above using **AND**

Example: Wikipedia AND source AND information AND education

5. Your results: too little information?

Did you get too few or no search results?

Option 1: Check your **spelling**.

- Misspelled words may be the reason for too few results. Try <http://www.dictionary.com>

Option 2: Search for alternative word endings (**truncation**).

- To search for various word endings, put an asterisk (*) at the end of the word root

Example: inform* will retrieve information, informed, informative, etc.

Option 3: Search similar or related words (synonyms) by placing **OR** between the words.

- Connecting the synonyms with **OR** will broaden your search by returning results in which any of the words appear.

Example: information OR research OR data

NOTES: Use this area to keep track of any additional keywords or search strategies you use today.